



PLEASANT HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 28015 Saskatoon, SKS7M 5V8

July 10, 2019

RE: CALLS TO ACTION IN PLEASANT HILL

Dear Mayor Charlie Clark and Councillor Hilary Gough,

We write this letter on behalf of the Pleasant Hill Community Association in Saskatoon, SK. As you know it is our Executives role to advocate for improvements to the social determinants of health for Pleasant Hill residents.

In 2003, The Pleasant Hill Revitalization Committee was consulted and gave many recommendations to the City of Saskatoon to improve the quality of life for resident of Pleasant Hill. It is now 2019 and still many of those recommendations have still not been actualized to their full potential. An example of the length of time it takes for things to transpire is recommendation 6.4.1 a & b: Lighting. This has been on the table for a decade and now that it is ready to roll out many these recommendations have changed or shifted. This is just one example.

Additional concerns, are that our community is bombarded with boarded up houses, violence, and habitual criminal and gang activity. We specifically stated that we did not want this to continue on within our community back in 2003 and now we have found ourselves in a more critical state due to poverty, gangs, and drugs. We have had emergency safety meetings for years, we have written reports coming up with ideas, we have engaged all levels of Government and City Services, we are tired of dealing with these issues time and time again, all of our executive members are volunteers, we do not get paid to stay on top of these issues and yet we feel like we are constantly left to bring these issues to the table. Also, many of our residents are left to navigate colonial systems when it comes to reporting crime, sending emails to SCAN, and writing letters with very little immediate action. This is problematic.

Back in 2003, it was shared that the City had the jurisdiction and resources to access information to hold landlords accountable whom were not taking care of their properties and that properties that are condemned for lengths of time could be taken down to give space to provide other investors the opportunity to build safe family and affordable housing and the landlords would be left to foot the bill due to their neglect and mismanagement.

Currently, 4 four plex properties and 2 houses on the 200 block of Ave V South and 20th Street continues to have boarded up housing going on months and people removing the boarded up doors and windows and going in to live after Health has condemned these homes. This is one block, there are many throughout our community in the same condition. Our Association would like to explore this program again, we have worked with Saskatchewan Health Region and have been in contact with Health Inspectors and Fire and have reported to bylaws time and time again for years.

There has been no improvement. The bare minimum is done to get these homes back up to inspection standards, these properties are unsafe living conditions and the activities that go on around them leaves our community members in a constant state of PTSD and trauma. People are living in a constant state of stress.

This letter is our Call to Action. Why is it acceptable for these conditions to continue to permeate within the Pleasant Hill Community? Why do our children need to continue to grow up, living and playing around third world living conditions, condemned houses, drug houses, and continued violence. Why are we still advocating for things like proper lighting, proper police resources, affordable and safe housing, adequate mental health and addictions services, the list could go on.

Many of our members who continue to bring these concerns to our attention in our everyday lives where we witness and live in these conditions are acknowledging that we have been voicing the same concerns for decades and our current outbreak of violence and crime can be contributed to the lack of funding, programs, resources, and leadership response to our needs. There is no other community within the City of Saskatoon that would be expected to tolerate and live in these types of condition. Why are the residents of Pleasant Hill expected to normalize it?

It is undeniable that our desperation comes at an economic advantage to the status quo. If we were to create an actual healthy society for all in Saskatoon, we would not have these narratives and living conditions to normalize, and the middle class would be out of jobs. We are starting to believe that there is an investment in keeping our people struggling. What is going to be done to flip this script?

The TRC's Calls to Action and UNDRIP that constitutes standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous Peoples are documents that have been well published around Saskatoon. Saskatoon prides it's self on being engaged in Reconciliation and yet we are still living the deeply systemic issues that colonialism maintains in Pleasant Hill.

What specific actions are going to be done on behalf of the City of Saskatoon so we can live and work in a community that ensures all of our residents are thriving not surviving or dying?

We can be contacted at 306-251-0402 or Jaltenberg@gscs.ca. We would like a formal response to what is planned on being done about these properties and how the City plans on responding to creatively and respectfully addressing the concerns we have brought forth.

Respectfully,

Pleasant Hill Community Association

Jennifer Altenberg, President

Cecile Smith, Vice President

Sharon Marsacano, Finance/Secretary

Sasha Stone, Program Coordinator

Shane Partridge, Community Safety Coordinator